

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 ICA-11 AID-05 EB-08 NSC-05  
TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-07 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00  
COME-00 FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03  
LAB-04 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 PA-01  
OIC-02 /103 W  
-----019535 051020Z /21

R 050910Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0636  
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY MANILA  
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SINGAPORE 2984

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: EGEN, ASEAN, SN  
SUBJECT: SINGAPORE VIEWS ON US-ASEAN WASHINGTON MEETING

REF: STATE 164743

1. I TOOK ADVANTAGE OF AMBASSADOR SNEIDER'S JULY 1 MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM TO RAISE POINTS IN PARAGRAPHS THREE THROUGH SEVEN REFTEL RE US-ASEAN WASHINGTON MEETING AND TO DISCUSS THEM WITH RAJARATNAM. ALSO LEFT WITH HIM AN AIDE-MEMOIRE SUMMARIZING THEM.

2. RESPONDING, RAJA OBSERVED THAT SINGAPORE WAS ONE OF THE TWO ASEAN COUNTRIES RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC TOWARD THE WASHINGTON MEETING, THE OTHER BEING THE PHILIPPINES. THE THAI HAD BEEN EXPRESSING RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE MEETING AND SO HAD THE INDONESIANS. HE DID NOT MENTION THE MALAYSIAN ATTITUDE.

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3. IN THE CASE OF BOTH THAILAND AND MALAYSIA, RAJA CONTINUED, HE BELIEVED THAT A PRIMARY REASON FOR THE EXPRESSIONS OF SKEPTICISM WAS THE QUESTION OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE ASEAN DELEGATIONS. CONFUSION HAD BEEN CREATED BY THE STRONG U.S. PRESSURE TO HAVE THEM HEADED BY ECONOMICS RATHER THAN FOREIGN MINISTERS. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THAI FONMIN UPADIT HAD BEEN

PLANNING TO HEAD THE THAI DELEGATION HIMSELF BUT THE U.S. PROPOSAL HAD UNDERCUT HIM, LEADING TO DISGRUNTLEMENT, SOME HARD FEELINGS, AND A TENDENCY TO TALK DOWN THE WASHINGTON MEETING. SIMILAR PROBLEM SEEMS TO HAVE ARISEN BETWEEN WIDJOJO, MOCHTAR, AND OTHERS IN INDONESIA, WITH SIMILAR RESULTS. SINGAPORE HAD HAD NO SUCH DIFFICULTIES, RAJA OBSERVED, SINCE IT HAD BEEN UNDERSTOOD FROM THE BEGINNING THAT HE WOULD HEAD THE SINGAPORE DELEGATION, WITH SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE GOH CHOK TONG AS DEPUTY.

4. AS TO THE RESULTS THAT COULD BE EXPECTED FROM THE WASHINGTON MEETING, RAJA SAID FERVENTLY THAT HE HOPED THE MEETING WOULD TURN OUT TO BE MORE THAN JUST A "DIALOGUE". WITH SENIOR ASEAN MINISTERS TRAVELING ALL THE WAY TO WASHINGTON, HE FELT IT IMPORTANT THAT THEY ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING MORE THAN A MERE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE ASEAN MINISTERS WERE EXPECTING MAJOR NEW AID PROGRAMS OR SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE U.S. POSITION ON SUCH ISSUES AS STABEX OR THE COMMON FUND. WHAT THEY DID HOPE FOR WAS A U.S. "COMMITMENT" TO ASEAN ON CERTAIN GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

5. RAJA SAID THAT A U.S. "COMMITMENT" WAS NEEDED IN TWO AREAS: A POLITICAL COMMITMENT SPECIFYING THAT THE INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY OF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES WERE IMPORTANT TO THE U.S., AND A SIMILAR ECONOMIC COMMITMENT TO THE BROAD PRINCIPLES OF SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE ASEAN COUNTRIES IN DEVELOPMENT.

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OPING THEIR ECONOMIES. IN ADDITION TO THIS, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THE U.S. COULD MAKE A FURTHER COMMITMENT TO CONSULT WITH THE ASEAN COUNTRIES BEFORE REACHING FINAL DECISIONS ON POLICIES AND LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS OF IMPORTANCE TO THEM. THERE WAS A FEELING AMONG THE ASEAN COUNTRIES, RAJA OBSERVED, THAT THE U.S. CUSTOMARILY PROCEEDED THROUGH ITS DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES, REACHED A FINAL DECISION, AND ONLY THEN, AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, WENT THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF CONSULTING THEM. WHAT THE ASEAN COUNTRIES WOULD LIKE WOULD BE A U.S. UNDERTAKING TO CONSULT THEM BEFORE FINAL DECISIONS HAD BEEN REACHED AND TO TAKE THEIR VIEWS ACTIVELY INTO ACCOUNT IN REACHING THEM.

6. (COMMENT: THROUGHOUT THE FOREGOING, IT WAS APPARENT THAT RAJARATNAM WAS USING THE WORD "COMMITMENT" IN A DIFFERENT SENSE FROM THAT NORMALLY UNDERSTOOD IN WASHINGTON. HE OBVIOUSLY WAS NOT SUGGESTING ANYTHING ALONG THE LINES OF A U.S. SECURITY GUARANTEE FOR THE ASEAN COUNTRIES OR A PROMISE OF SPECIFIC ECONOMIC SUPPORT. WHAT HE SEEMED TO BE ASKING WAS A PUBLIC AFFIRMATION BY THE U.S. THAT WE CONSIDER ASEAN IMPORTANT TO OUR OWN INTERESTS, BOTH POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY, COUPLED WITH MORE ATTENTION BY U.S. POLICY MAKERS.

DISCUSSING THE LATTER POINT, HE OBSERVED THAT ALTHOUGH FORMER SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY EVERYWHERE ELSE, "HOW HELPFUL IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IF HE HAD MADE ONE SINGLE VISIT TO THAILAND." MORE RECENTLY, THE ASEAN COUNTRIES HAD BEEN GLAD TO SEE VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE BUT "HOW MUCH MORE IT WOULD HAVE MEANT IF IT HAD BEEN SECRETARY VANCE.")

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TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-07 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00  
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LAB-04 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 PA-01  
OIC-02 /103 W  
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R 050910Z JUL 78  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SINGAPORE 2984

7. I TOLD RAJARATNAM THAT WE HAD PRODUCED A NEW DRAFT AGENDA, JUST PASSED ON TO THE GOP, AND OUTLINED ITS MAIN POINTS FOR HIM. HE HAD NO TROUBLE WITH IT NOR ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS THAT SINGAPORE MIGHT WANT TO RAISE UNDER ITEM 5 OR ELSEWHERE.

8. AFTER FOREGOING DISCUSSION, I SWITCHED TO MTN AND MADE POINTS IN PARAGRAPHS EIGHT AND NINE REFTEL. (THIS WAS BEFORE I LEARNED THAT SINGAPORE HAD PROVIDED A WRITTEN RESPONSE OF SORTS TO OUR REQUESTS FOR A WRITTEN OFFER.) RAJA LISTENED, INDICATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD, BUT MADE NO SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT.

9. COMMENT: NOT CLEAR TO WHAT EXTENT, IF AT ALL, RAJARATNAM REFLECTS VIEWS OF OTHER ASEAN MEMBERS TOWARD DESIRED OUTCOME OF WASHINGTON MEETING. FROM HIS REMARKS IT WOULD APPEAR THAT PRIMARY SINGAPORE GOAL WILL BE A RINGING U.S. AFFIRMATION

OF GENERALIZED SUPPORT FOR ASEAN IN THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE.  
THIS LED AMBASSADOR SNEIDER TO SUGGEST AFTER THE MEETING WITH  
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RAJARATNAM THAT, EVEN THOUGH WE AS HOST WOULD NORMALLY PRODUCE  
THE FIRST COMMUNIQUE DRAFT, WE MIGHT IN THIS CASE CONSIDER  
REVERSING THE PROCESS AND INVITING ASEAN TO COME UP WITH A  
FIRST DRAFT.

10. BANGKOK AND JAKARTA MIGHT WANT TO COMMENT ON  
RAJA'S REMARKS IN PARAGRAPH THREE ABOVE.

11. WE DO NOT PLAN TO REPEAT REFTEL APPROACH TO GOS ECONO-  
MIC MINISTERS AS REQUESTED PARAGRAPH FOUR REFTEL. RAJARATNAM  
IS CLEARLY CALLING THE TUNE ON THE WASHINGTON MEETING. SINGAPORE  
GOVERNMENT IS SMALL AND WITH REASONABLY GOOD LATERAL COMMUNICA-  
TIONS; IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED ODD BEHAVIOR IF A FOREIGN DIP-  
LOMAT MADE AN APPROACH TO ONE MINISTER AFTER ALREADY HAVING  
MADE SAME APPROACH TO ANOTHER.  
INGRAHAM

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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
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20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014